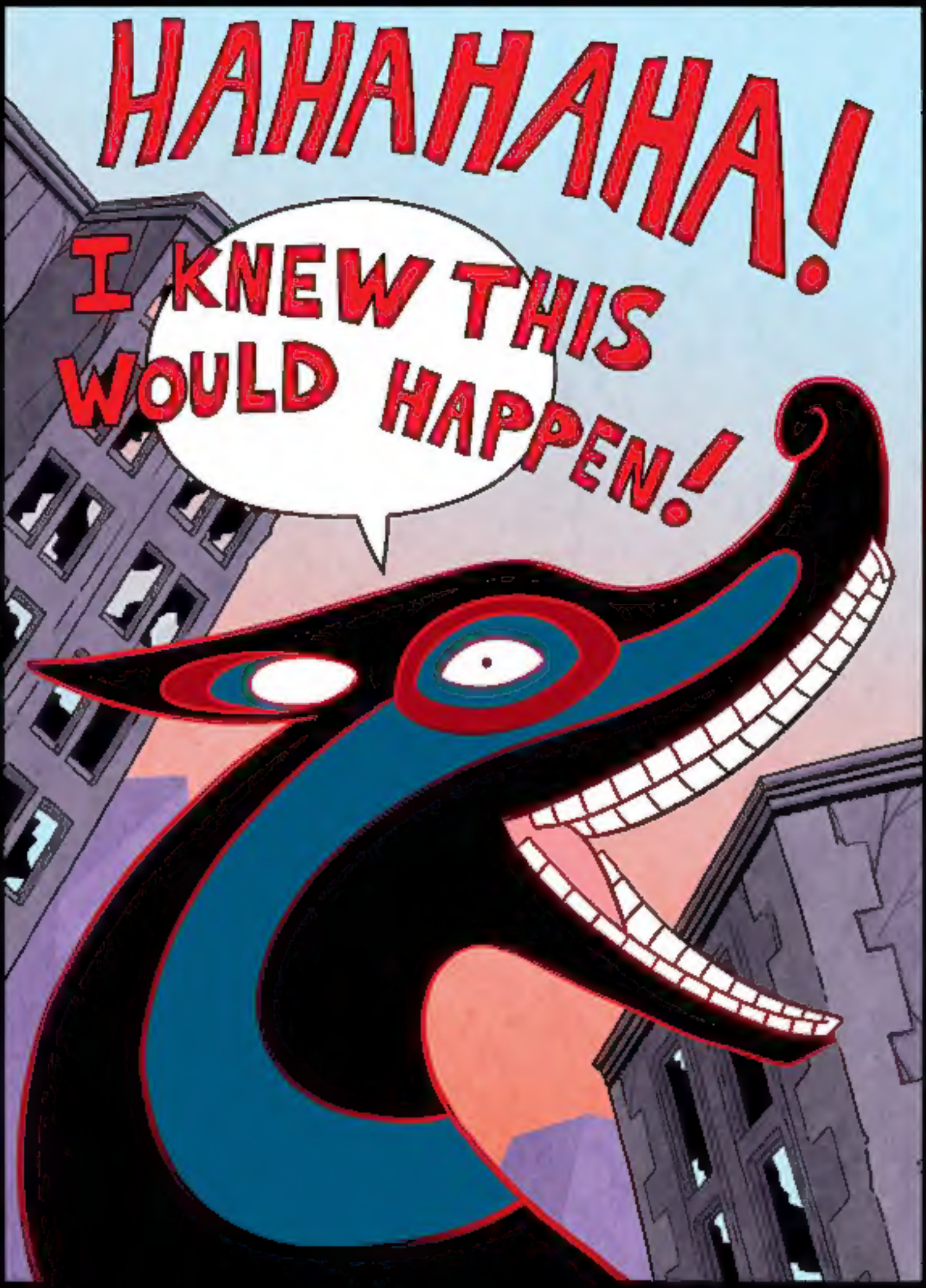
Gunnerkrigg Court

Chapter 90:

Coyote Knew This Would Happen


HAHAHA!
I KNEW THIS WOULD HAPPEN!

When I first met you, fire head girl, I knew you were the type of person Ysengrin would be drawn to!
your steadfast and unflinching behavior, there was something about you that he could not help but respect!
I did what I could to foster the relationship between the two of you, bringing you closer!

I knew that, when he took my power, he would try to live amongst the humans while he gathered the pieces of my plan!
and, in this guise, I also knew he would find a way to be close to you, and be drawn in even more!
and now, here he is, in love with you, fire head girl!
hahaha!
tell me, can you bear to kill the one you love so dearly?!
and you, how must it feel knowing she will plunge my tooth into your very heart?!

...
coyote, Loup and I are not in love.
but he said...
he's in love with someone else.
hello there!
and you are?

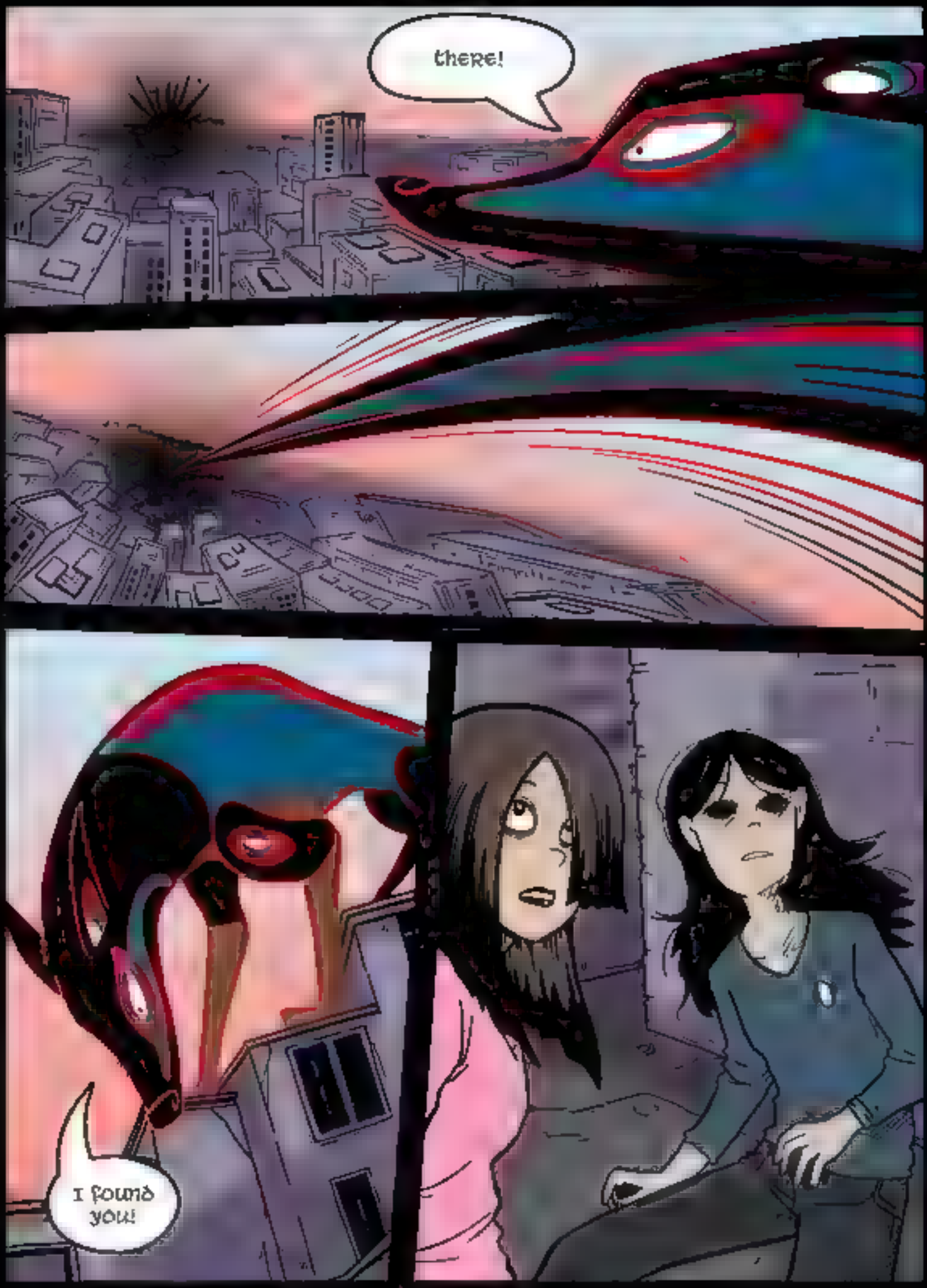
I'm Lana!
I'm Jerrek's girlfriend!
Jerrek's...
you fell in love with the wrong person?!

you... aren't even human!
what are you?
well, we like to consider ourselves new peopl
some sort of golem?
coyote!
they are creations of a divine being!
a powerful person that created them as you once did the shadow men!
a new god walks the earth?
and they dare interfere with my plans?!

Loup you fool!
you allowed yourself to be lost in your disguise!
and set your sights on this creature!

CRUNCH
Lana!
now, Loup,
use the power I gave you!
and we will find this so called divine being!

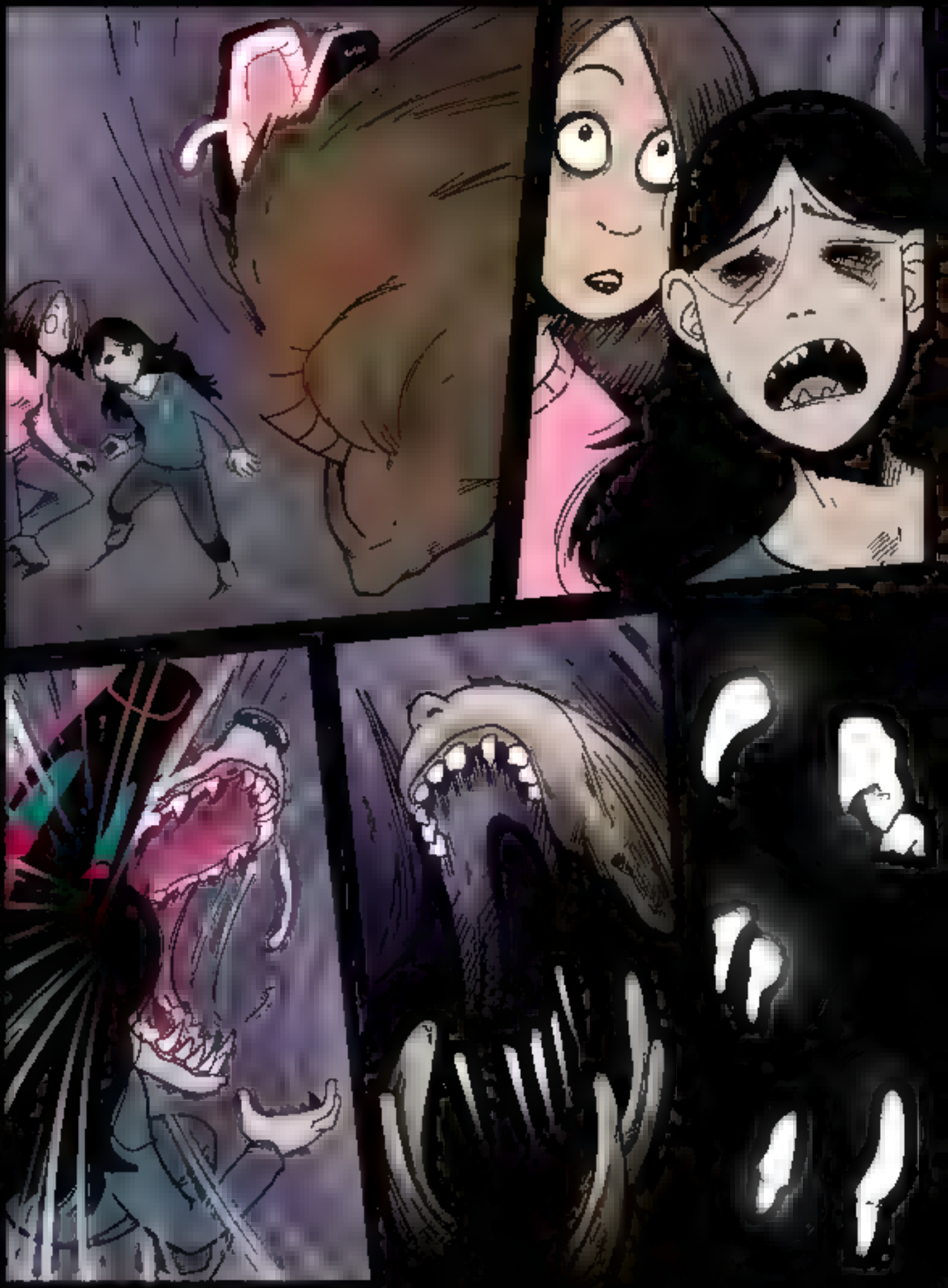
this being should be one of great power...
no, I know what that is.
the court's cowardly plan to flee.
a light on the horizon...
perhaps an area of darkness...

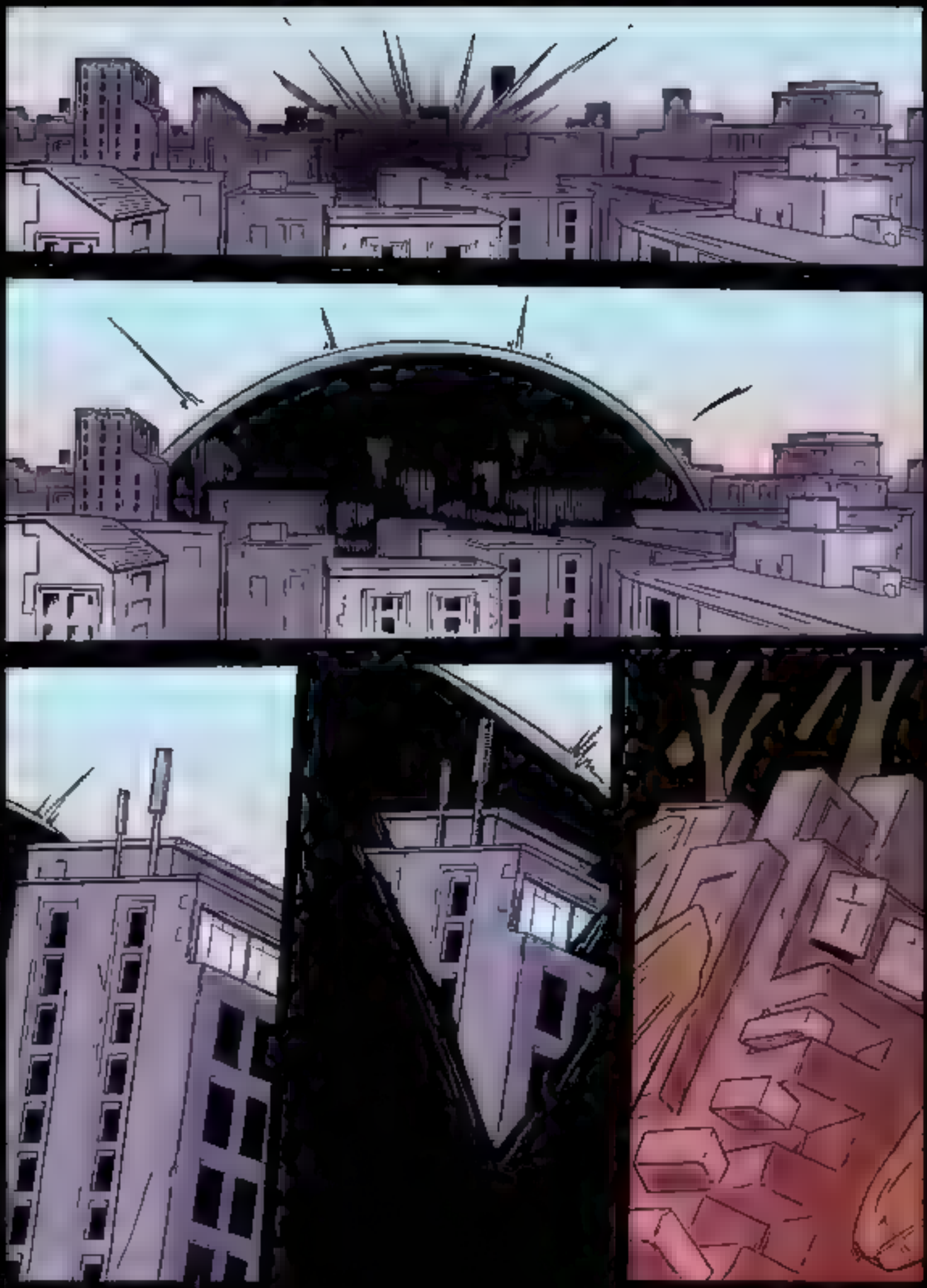

there!
I found you!

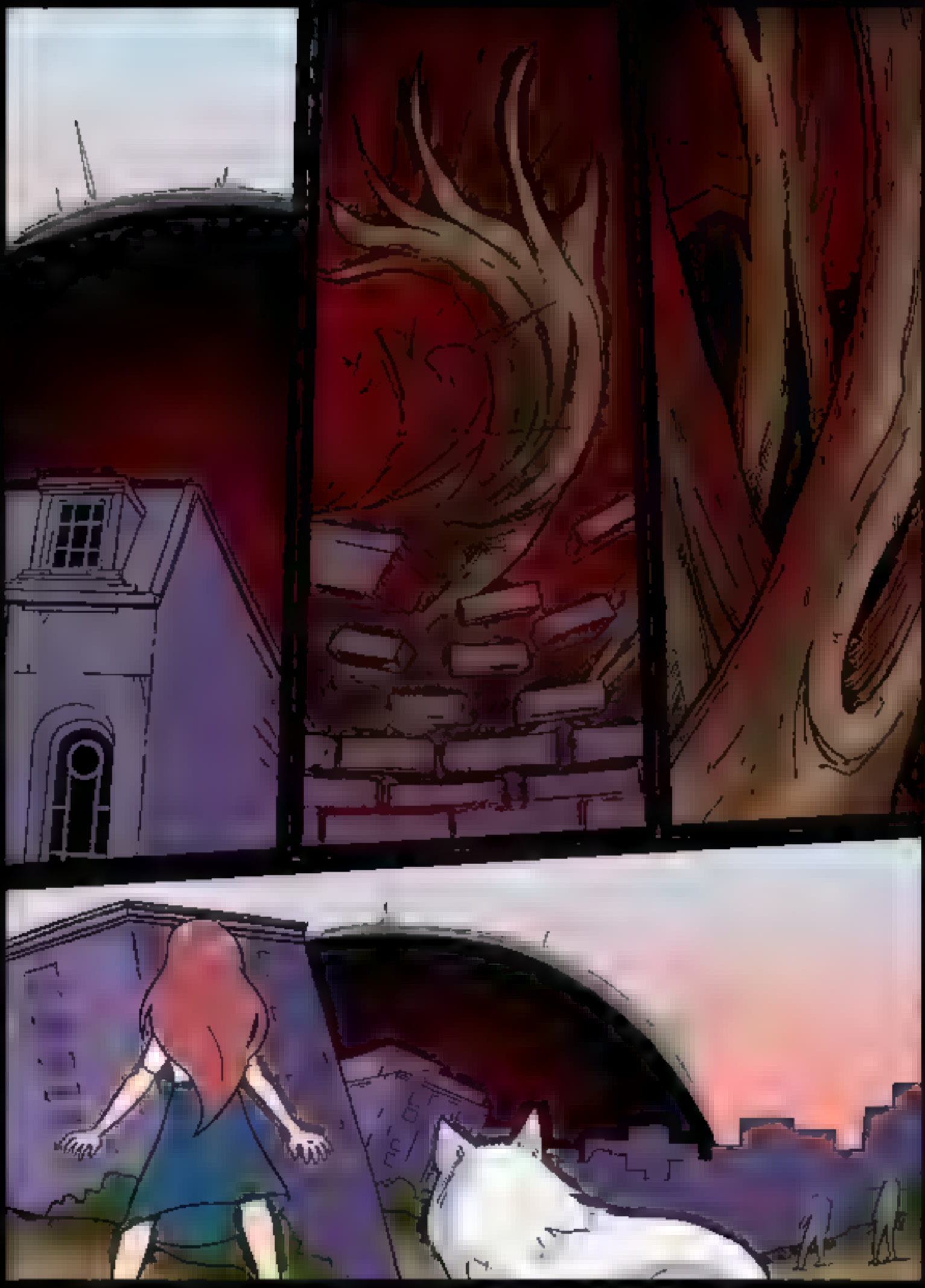
L-Lana...

JERREK, I...
ah .. terrible luck, old boy...

no, Loup!
keep control of yourself!
this is what coyote wants you to do!
SHARP







oh no.
what is it?
it's zimmy.
stay close!

Gunnerkrigg Court

Chapter 91:

Into the Distortion

Renard, is that really you?
as - as far as I can tell...
you seem... normal.
well, always glad to hear it.

ah, the new people...
they seem real too.
but they look different in the ether now.
miss annie, do you know what's happening?!

We're inside a distortion made by a girl I know
But it looks different...
It looked like it started from far away, but we were still caught in it.
Coyote must have had influence over this as well.
I can access my powers.
as can I
It looks like the world was affected, not us.
It's usually the other way around.

you've experienced this before?
a few times, yes.
coyote must have gone looking for kat and found zimmy instead.
ah, yes, he would not have been able to see kat in the ether. luckily for her
miss kat... the angel was still transferring recovered cpus when this happened. but that has stopped now
all that remain are these plants...
wait, let me see

ah! Is that a cpu?
things in a distortion like this might not be as they seem
sometimes an object could even appear metaphorically
you should probably still collect these seeds and look after them while we deal with this
for now, we should regroup
is there a way to contact kat?
oh! that device she gave us...
CLICK

nothing's happen -
huh?
KIM
KIM
KIM
what is all this?
miss, if I may.
CLICK
SNAP
CLICK
It appears to be a communication device
Guys! Can you hear me?!
Kat!

oh good, the teleporter does work!
I couldn't activate my loup barrier, but I was able to find your location when you pressed that button.
wait, kat: the radio you sent, did you mean to send it in small pieces?
what? no! that wasn't supposed to happen...
darn, I guess the teleporter is too risky to use right now.
anyway, I'm guessing this is all caused by loup?
no, it wasn't loup. it's coyote and zimmy
...!
coyote came back and...
he ate lana...

he what?!
can you... bring her back?
you still have her cpu, right?
annie...
I could make her body again but the mind transfer is a one-time thing.
It can't be done a second time
oh no... poor Lana...
for now... just tell me what's happened. are you okay over there?

okay, it sounds like what's happening here, too.
the new people and I are fine, but everything looks messed up...
do you think this reached all the way to the shore?
possibly, yes. this distortion is far bigger than anything I've seen.
people must be freaking out.
you need to get home and let them know what's going on!
m-me?!
yeah! unless the court has another coyote and zimmy expert on hand, you're the best person to handle this!

the court was looking to mess with monsters like coyote and zimmy, and look what they got.
zimmy isn't a monster.
I'll help as much as I can, but when it comes to matters in the ether, there's not much I can do.
you're the first person I'd turn to!
thanks, kat
we'll get through this

excuse me, miss.
we overheard you talking to the angel, and we would like to go with you.
there are not many cpu seeds left to collect, and we would like to take them to the angel directly.
we would also like to gather together in memory of lana
oh . of course
the more the merrier.

excuse me, miss.
we overheard you talking to the angel, and we would like to go with you.
there are not many cpu seeds left to collect, and we would like to take them to the angel directly.
we would also like to gather together in memory of lana
oh . of course
the more the merrier.

we are ready to leave now
then let's head off!
but.. which way do we go?
this way

this doesn't look like the court .
no, it's all very .. zimmy.
the buildings aren't quite right
make sure to stay close and don't wander off alone!

wh-what is that?!
I'm guessing something from the depths of zimmy's mind
It comes with the territory
Literally, in this case.

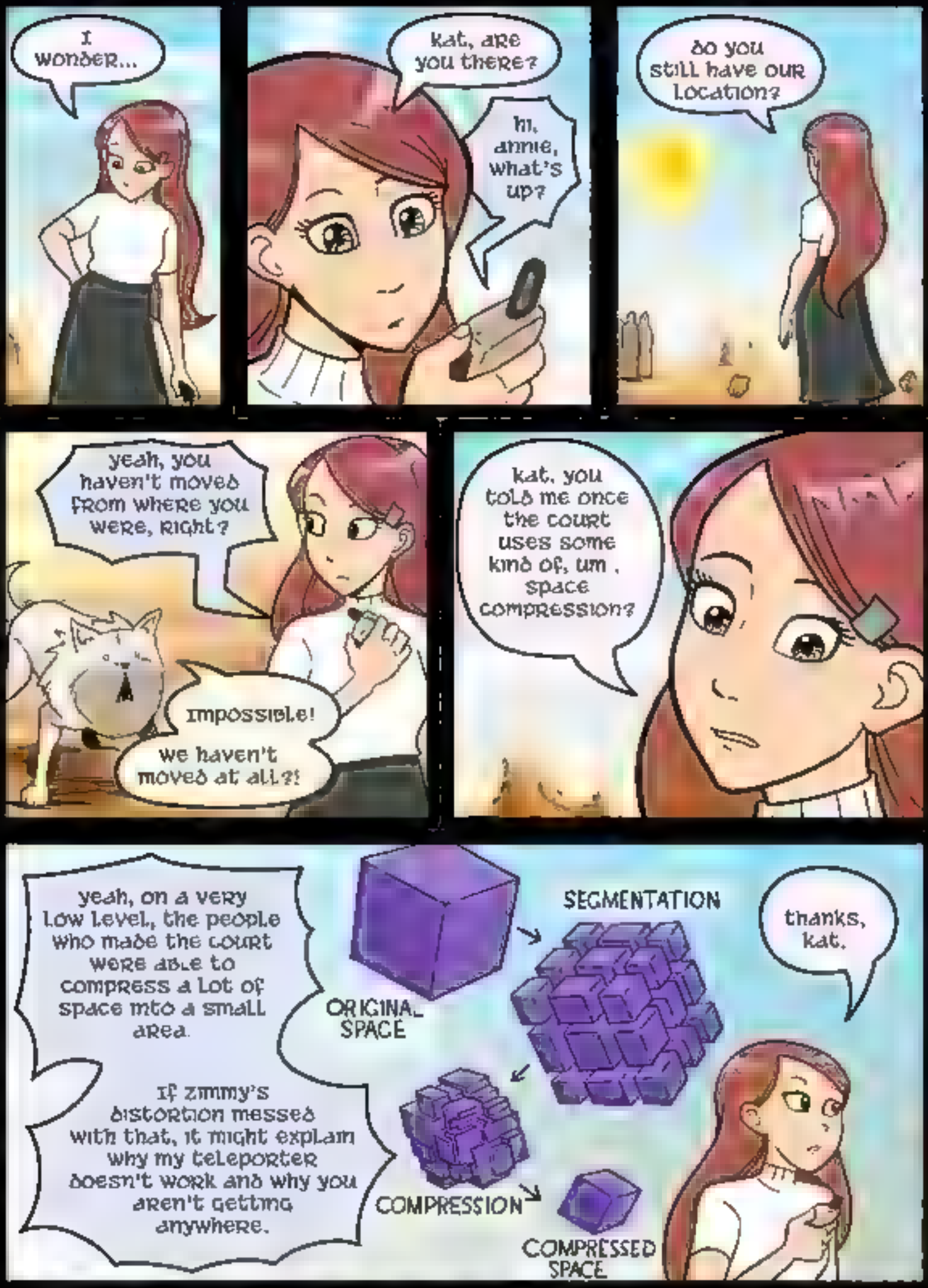
BSSH

we can't go deeper into this...
look!
head to that light!

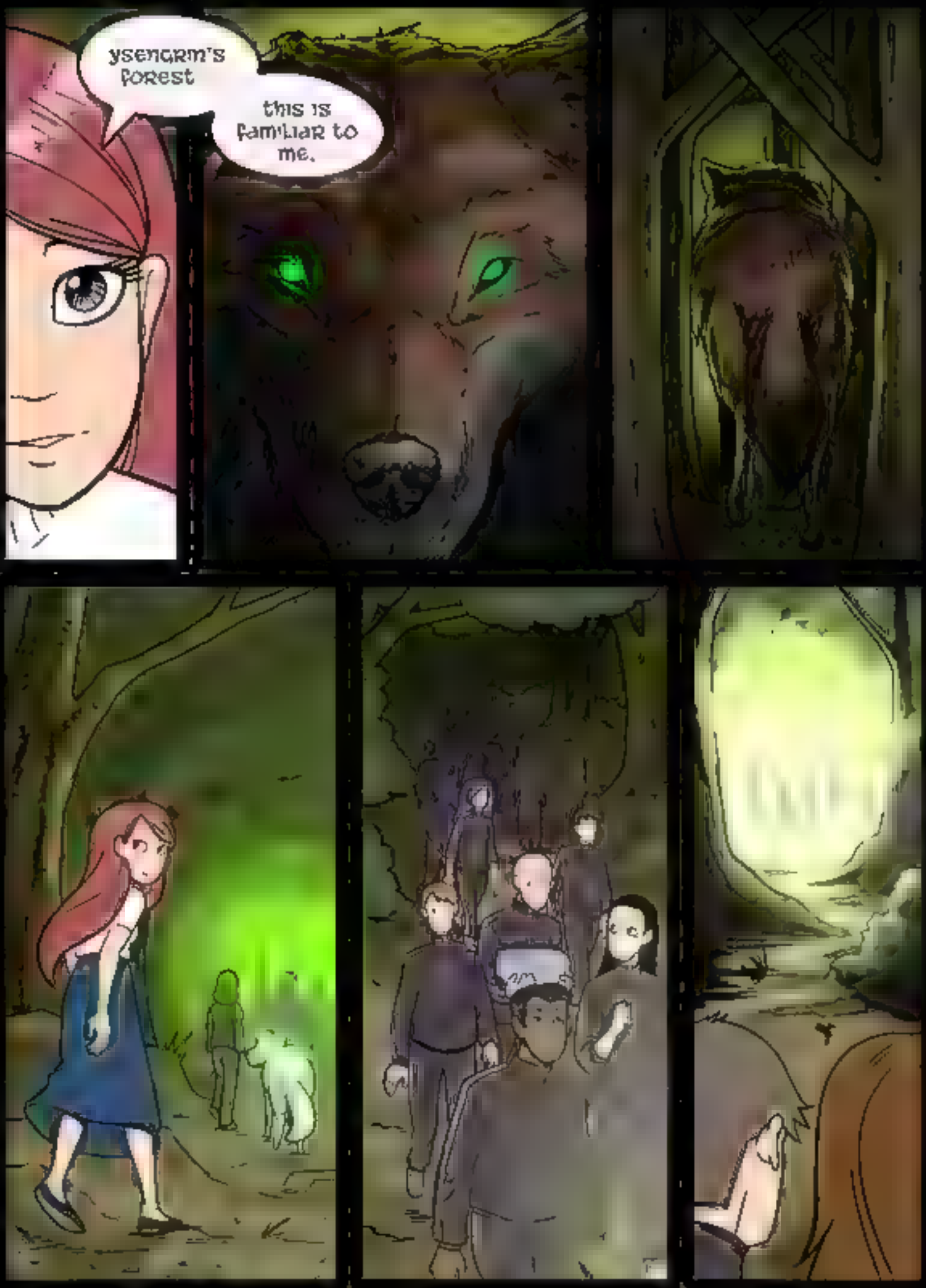
coyote .
this is starting to make sense
is it?

tee hee!
wayward travelers!
If you seek the way, you must answer.
What bends as it straightens
has nothing to prove
but if you find one
you will always find two?
a riddle.
Mrr mrr.. Mr...
I know the answer

FLUFF
um...
this is coyote's manifestation, we don't have to follow his rules
I suspect we need to think about traveling less literally


I wonder...
kat, are you there?
hi, annie, what's up?
so you still have our location?
yeah, you haven't moved from where you were, right?
impossible!
we haven't moved at all?!
kat, you told me once the court uses some kind of, um, space compression?
yeah, on a very low level, the people who made the court were able to compress a lot of space into a small area.
if zimmy's distortion messed with that, it might explain why my teleporter doesn't work and why you aren't getting anywhere.
ORIGINAL SPACE
SEGMENTATION
COMPRESSION
COMPRESSED SPACE
thanks, kat.

I picked a direction that looked familiar to me... I thought it looked like the court
but it wasn't.
then we ran from those monsters and we ended up somewhere far away, but unfamiliar,
In that case we should look for something familiar and head towards that?
but this landscape is very alien to us
to me, too...
the sun
we all recognise the sun.
sunlight...
passing through the leaves


ysengrim's forest
this is familiar to me.

court!
strange days, eh?!
we're trying to figure this all out... we were looking to find our way back home
so were we, and we found this!
we don't know how you did it, but we like this new forest that sprang up!
feels like home.
it would make sense the tree elves are more comfortable here than in the court.

the trees are bendy here!
nice and supple.
could get a house up in a few hours I reckon
THUD
CRUNCH
moss ogre!

heh, haven't seen one in a while since we got to the court!
FS-SSH

STOMP
STOMP
STOMP
ysengrm clearly thought very highly of you.
he isn't the fool I thought he was.

I think they're watching out for the tree elves.
Other creatures that used to live in the forest might have found their way here, and they aren't all friendly.
Ysengrin would want to keep things in order.
Oh!

ah! this is familiar!

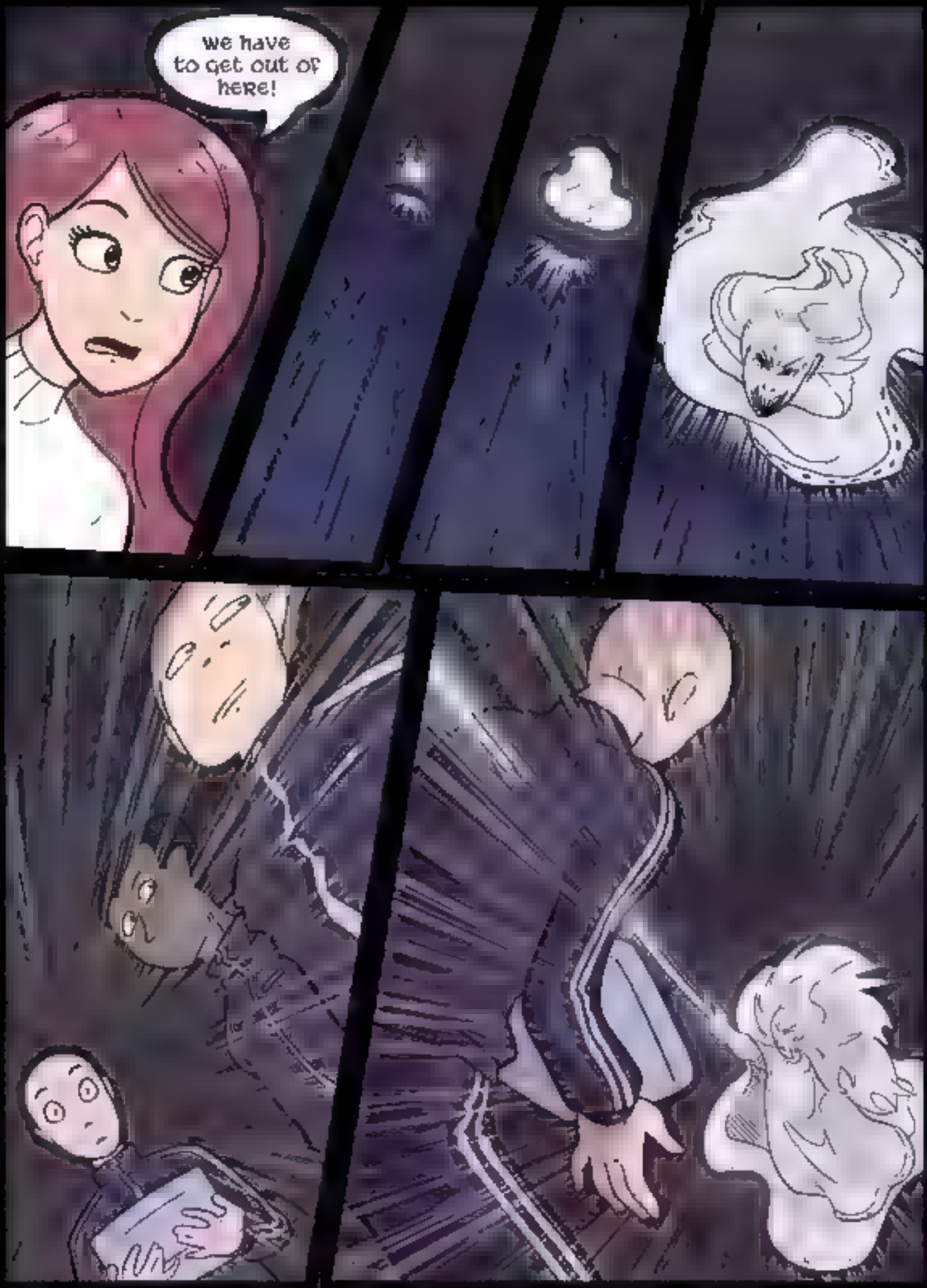
did you notice?
yes
the girl with black hair seems to be the first to notice the way forward.
she looks a little like
zimmy, yes.
let's see where she takes us.

Jerrek slipped by us amongst all the new faces, and we should not let that happen again
hmm..
maybe kat knows who she is?
hi, kat, are you there?
hey
um... any update on our location?
let's see...
...
hey, you're all the way out where the bridge used to be!
how'd you get there so fast?

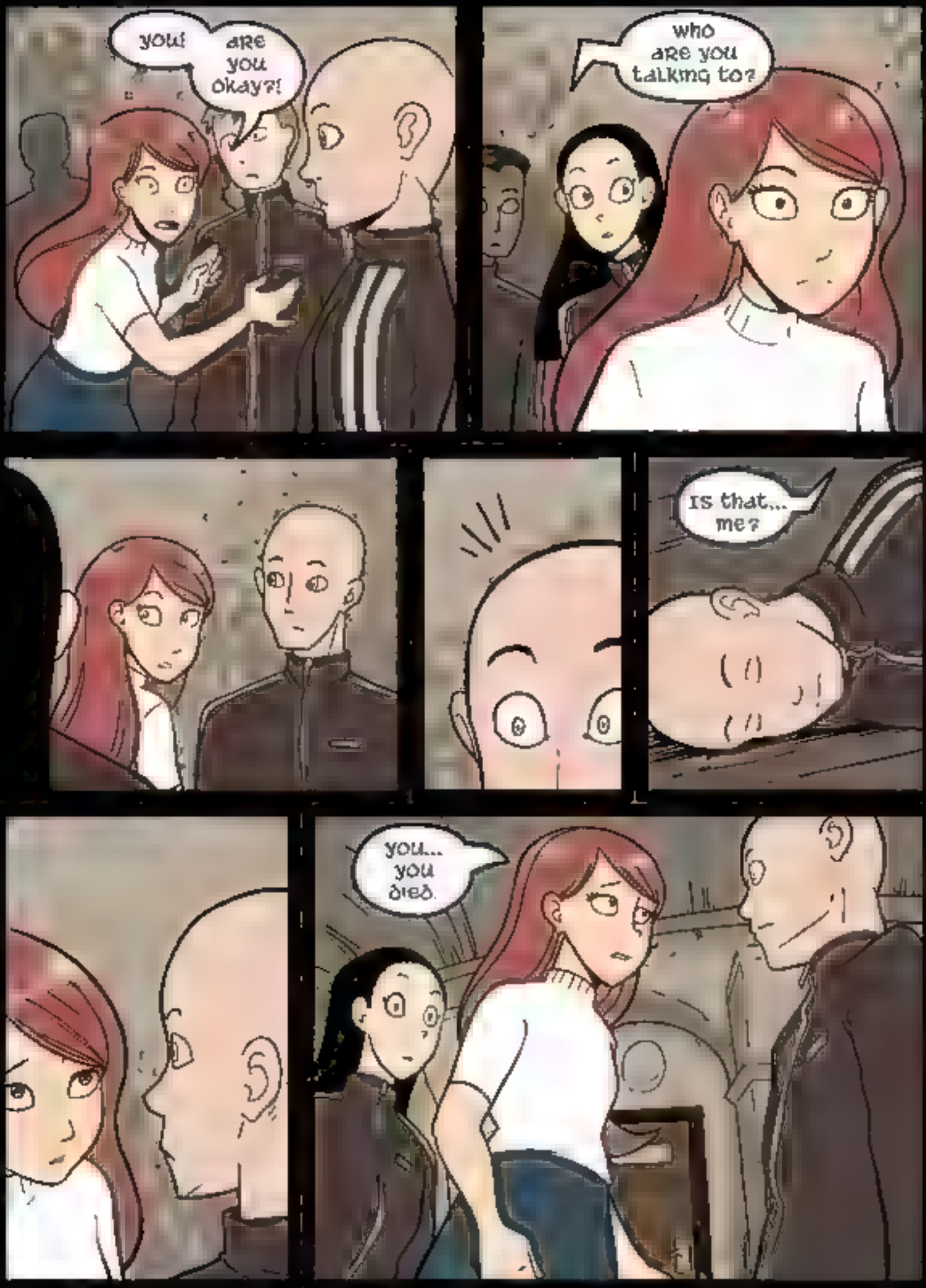
So you [redacted] when you met with that person from the new world?
They said something about travelling through space metaphorically?
Oh, yeah... you think that's what's happening here?
It could be. We're finding areas based on memories and familiarity, but we also seem to be physically moving there.

what the...
kat, I have to go!
no!

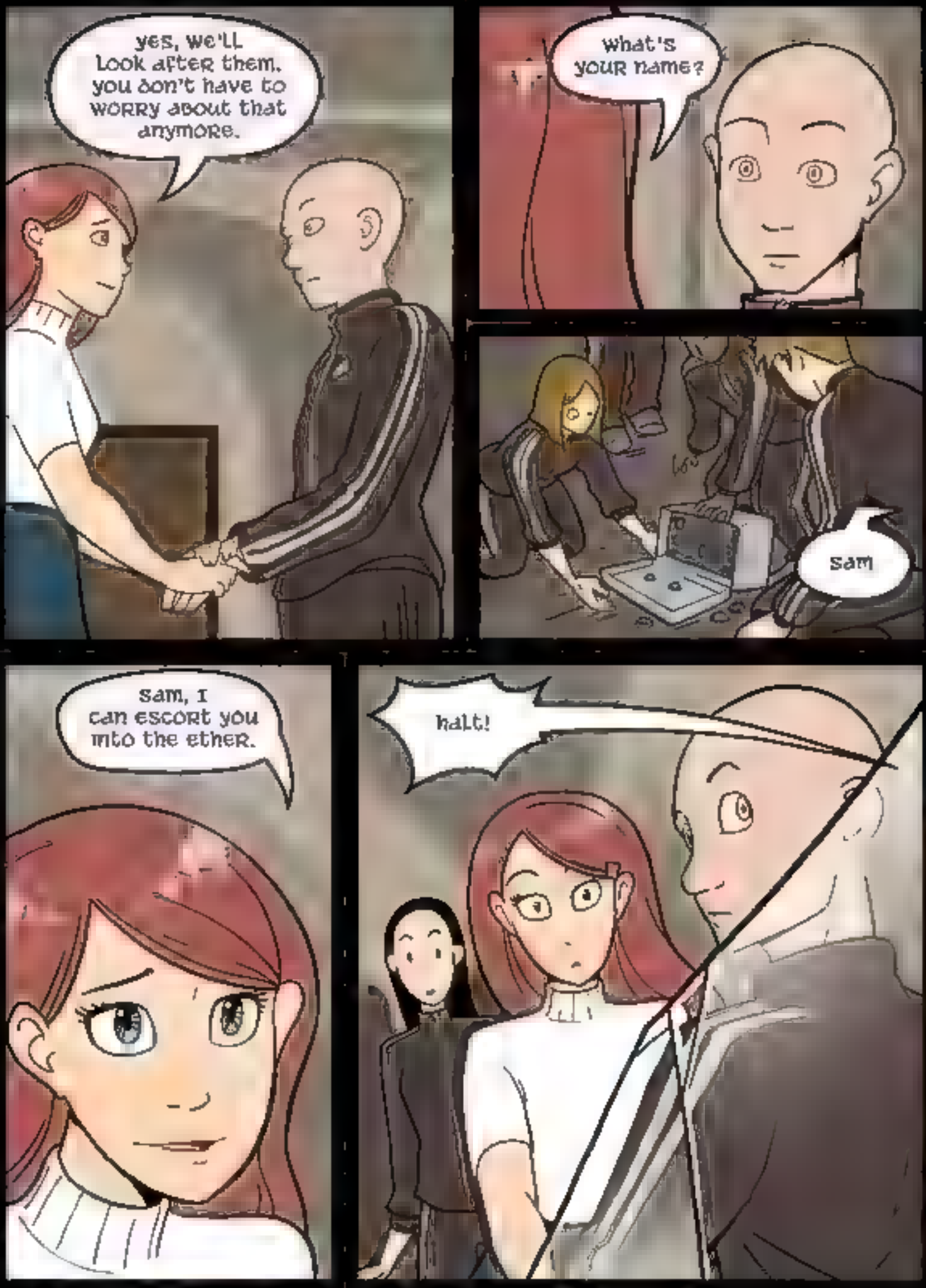
wait, this is
the arnan waters!


we have to get out of here!

oh no..
I caused this by remembering Jeanne...
what happened?

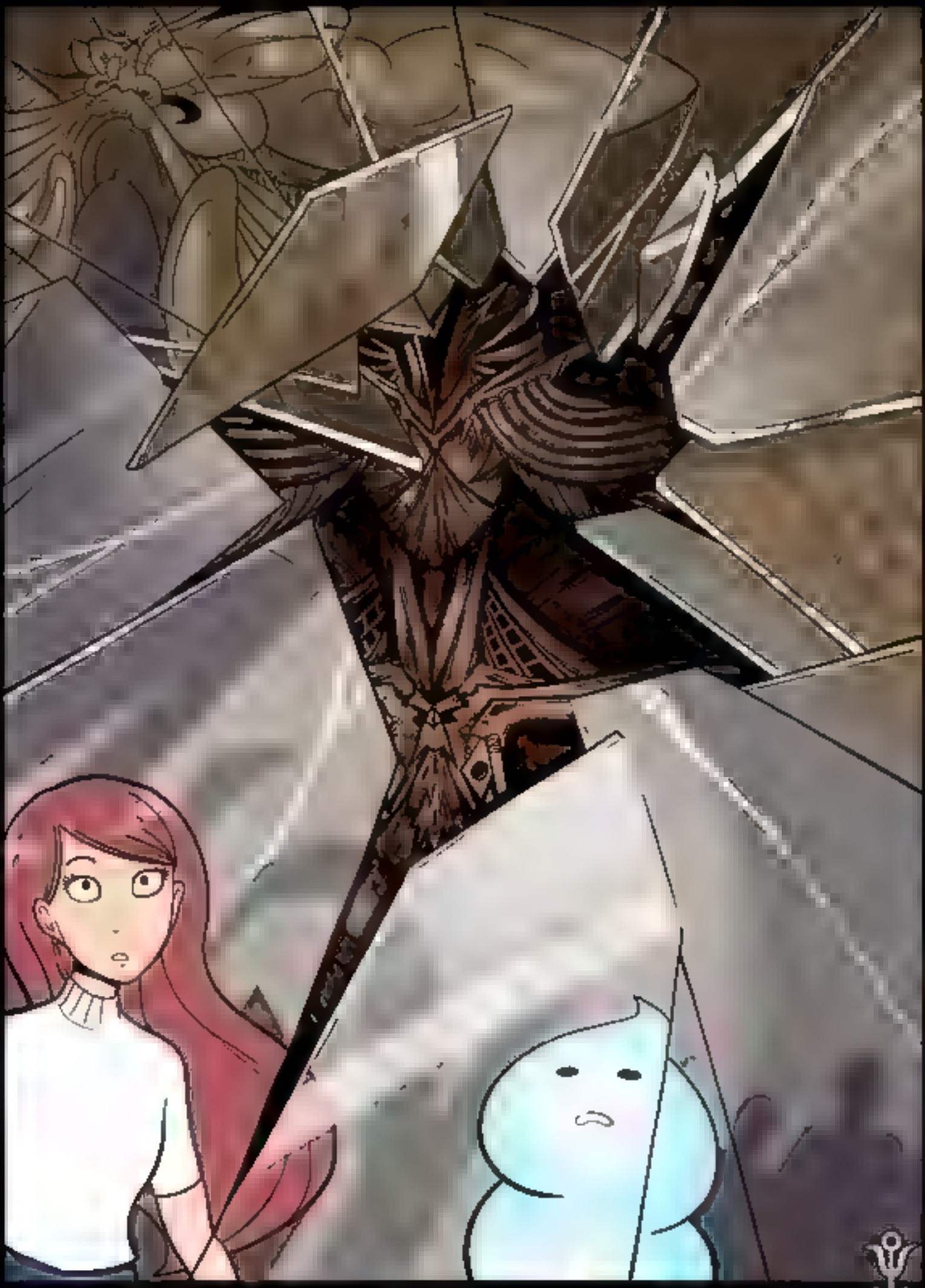

you! are you okay?!
who are you talking to?
is that... me?
you... you died.

It's been a while since I've seen something like this...
ah... you can see his ghost..
he's...dead?
I didn't know if this could even happen with the new people.
but Lana...
when coyote got her, I didn't see anything.
so she might still be alive?
I'm so sorry this happened to you.
the cpu chips .. are they safe?


yes, we'll look after them. you don't have to worry about that anymore.
what's your name?
sam
sam, I can escort you into the ether.
halt!

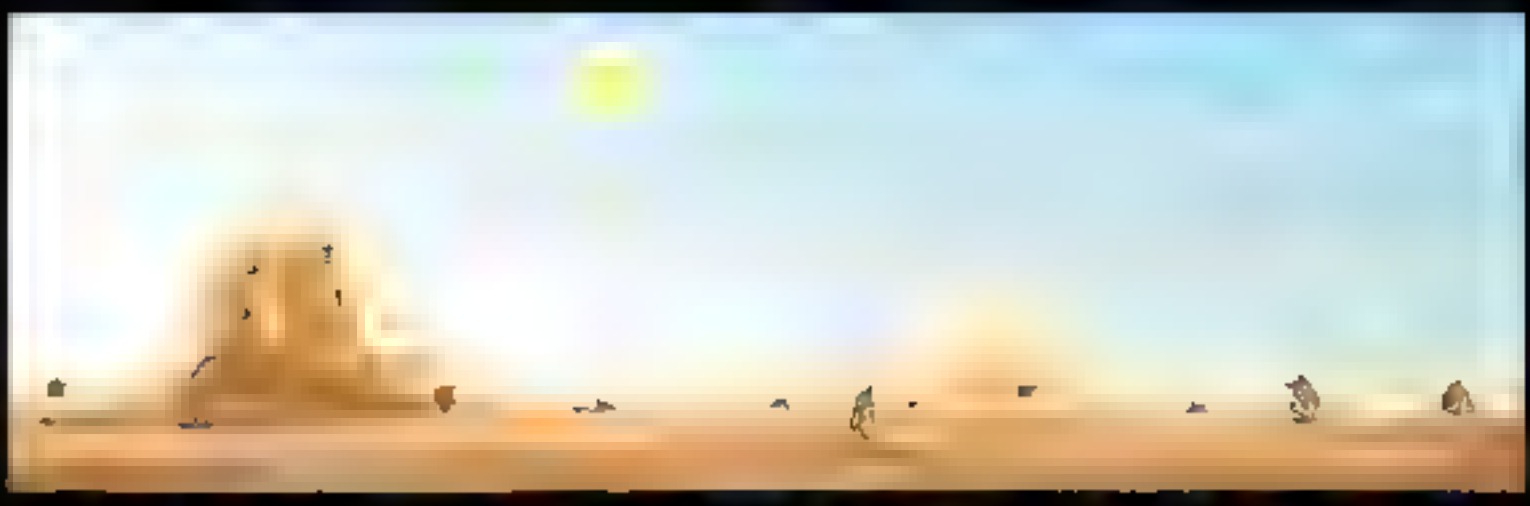
and.. helper ghost.
arbiter Saslamel!
Interpreter!
I had a feeling I'd see you again!

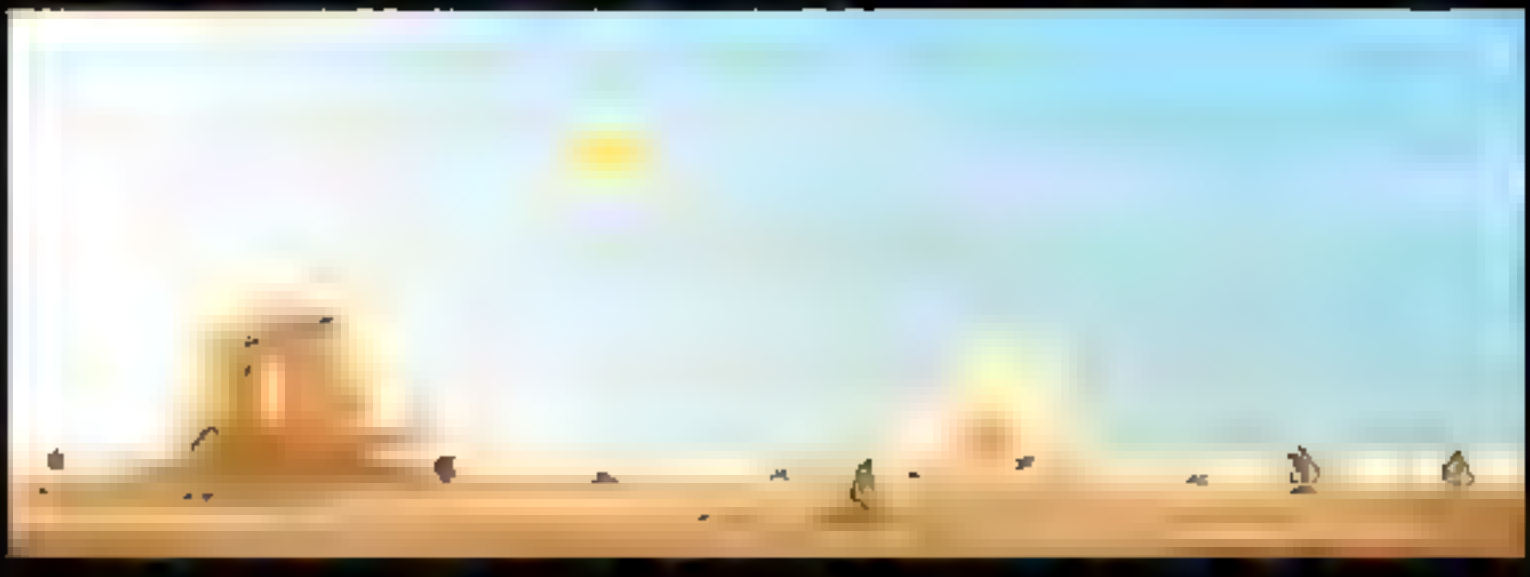
I know you psychopomps are eager to claim souls, and we're usually happy to let you fight it out amongst yourselves, but we really must intervene here.
as this is the first death for this type of creature, it must really be seen by the appropriate person.
but .. who—
wait, it can't be!
we call forth the keeper of this soul!



Summerbrigg Towel

Riddle Quest





Gunnerkrigg Court

Chapter 92:

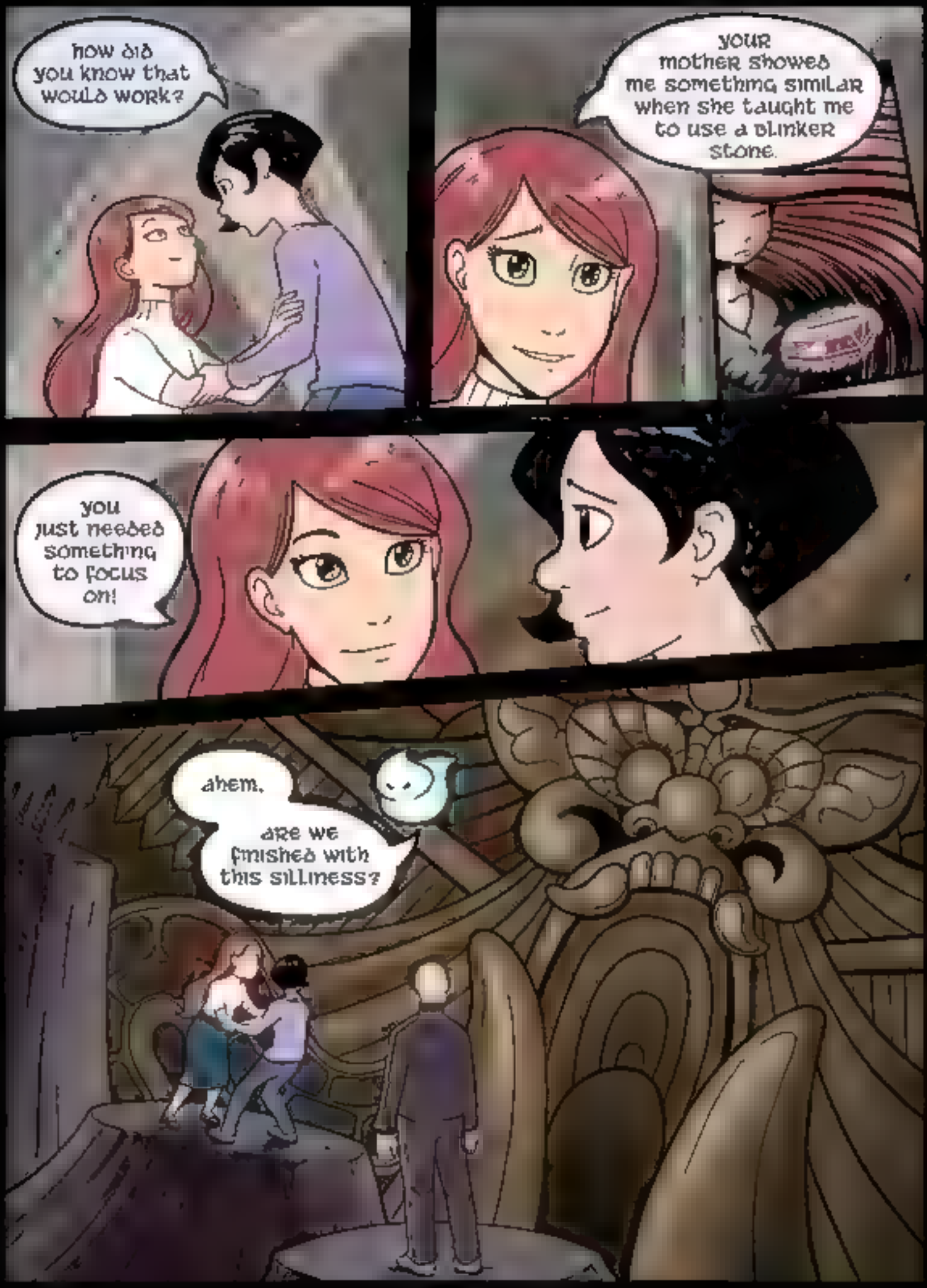
The World Is A Dead Thing

what
is
this?!

this isn't the person we talked to last time!
It is!
I've seen this before!
a - annie?!
kat!
what's going on?!
everything's going crazy!

you need to concentrate!
you're being called by the arbiter!
that guy?!
w - why?!
just focus on my voice!
try to picture me in your mind!
I - I can't!
try this!

how did . I ~ I saw you!
this is what it's like to look into the ether.
kat! thank goodness.
annie


how did you know that would work?
your mother showed me something similar when she taught me to use a blinker stone.
you just needed something to focus on!
ahem.
are we finished with this silliness?

Katerina Donlan, you are contractually bound to the spirits belonging to the present creature
am I?
on the event of their death, you are responsible for their conveyance into the ether.
wait . their death?
oh, buddy. what happened?
I was killed by a ghost, I think.
but if you're the first ..
I thought you said Lana...
we're still figuring things out

so, let me guess.
the contract I agreed to has some small-print about me being responsible for the new people's souls?
amongst other things, yes!
I really should have read that whole thing...
amateur mistake.
does this make kat a psychopomp?
not exactly!
if you wish, you may take the souls into the ether yourself, or you may outsource the task to an existing guide
but you must make the choice.
I warn you; arguments of ownership often spring from improperly choosing a representative.

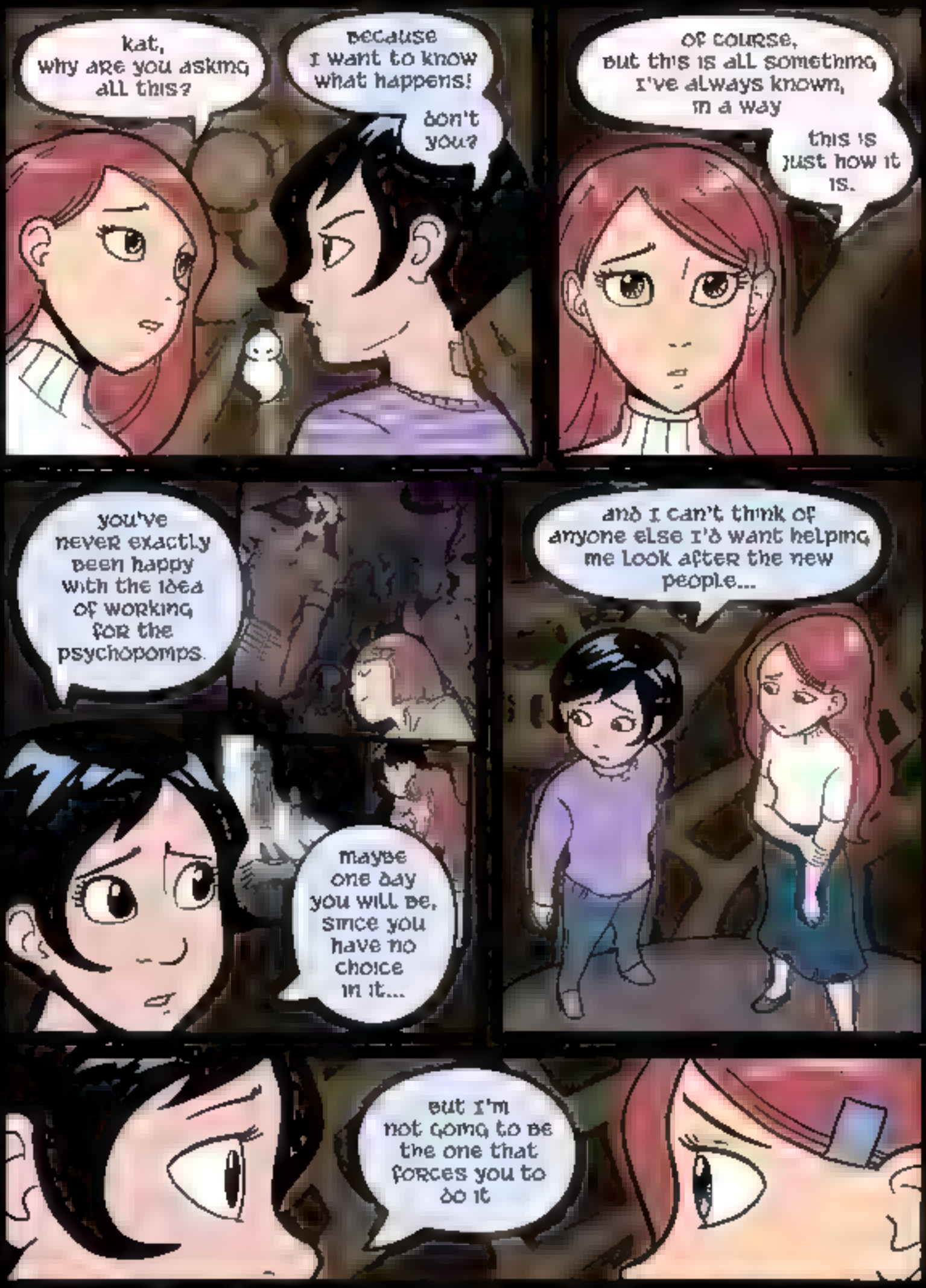
what is all this for?
pardon?
the guides. ownership. escorting a soul into the ether.
why?
what's the point?
the point?
the world is a dead thing.
filled with nothing.

the ether is the life of the world.
it began small a spark.
a fire grew. envelopes the world. the ether is this fire.
the ether transforms changes. makes the dead alive.
the ether is shared. a vast ocean of life. taken from. added to.
the ether is also changed. strained through life. returned more powerful.

so the ether is kinda like a source of energy that gets stronger when it's used?
no wonder the court wants it
but, the psychopomps, and this business about ownership, what's that about?
the guides ensure the ether is diverted back to where it belongs.
so it is not left to languish,
or at risk from those who would misuse it.
ghosts, trapped souls, the eternally lost.
there are departments that help put this energy to use, but even they cannot find them all.
that must be the rots.

left alone, the memory of them fades, and so does the power of the ether.
then, they are as nothing. a waste.
now, antimony carver. you rushed to claim this soul.
no I didn't, I just happened to be here!
katerina donlan, do you designate antimony to be the permanent guide for these creatures?
wait, wait, I'm not finished!
if I did pick annie, would she officially be a psychopomp?
yes.
and then?
what happens to annie?

this is not our department, but we gather she will be endowed with the abilities of an afterlife guide.
so she'll get special powers or something?
the afterlife guides are a respected group, honoured for their dedicated service and solemn duty
"special powers" is a glib reduction of their station.
stop avoiding the question! what happens to her?
she will exist in a sphere outside that of mortals. away from the confines of the physical world.
are you saying she'll die?
no, the guides are living creatures.
but they do not dwell amongst the living.


kat, why are you asking all this?
because I want to know what happens! don't you?
of course, but this is all something I've always known, in a way
this is just how it is.
you've never exactly been happy with the idea of working for the psychopomps.
and I can't think of anyone else I'd want helping me look after the new people...
maybe one day you will be, since you have no choice in it...
but I'm not going to be the one that forces you to do it

In the future, no matter where we are in our lives, I'd be honoured to take this burden from you.
Let's see how the rest of our lives go first.
But sure, I'll think about it
until then, I'll do it.
With your help.
You got that? I'm not making an official choice right now.
I see, I see.
This is acceptable
however...

the arbiter has only appeared this time to assign responsibility
he will not appear again until you are ready to make a choice.
as such, you will not have access to the tools and skills afforded an afterlife guide.
the next time one of these "new people" dies, you will have to find them on your own merit, or their essence will indeed languish
or perhaps fall victim to a fate worse than death.
I'll figure it out.

sorry to keep you waiting, buddy.
kat, the fact that sam is here now, and about to be brought into the ether, is proof that the new people really are something special.
well, gee, thanks, annie
thank you, angel!
I watched you develop their bodies over the years and you truly created something more than the sum of their parts.
now, at the end of their lives, they enter into the fabric of the world.
the collective consciousness of all things.

do you have any parting words?
just . I hope I did a good job.
first, inspecting water pipes, and now as a person
that's it.
you did great, sam.

weird.
he had no idea who he was.
that always happens.
how do you feel?
... I don't know.
sounds about right.
hey, guy can I get a copy of that contract I agreed to?
that is a perfectly sensible request
BLIP

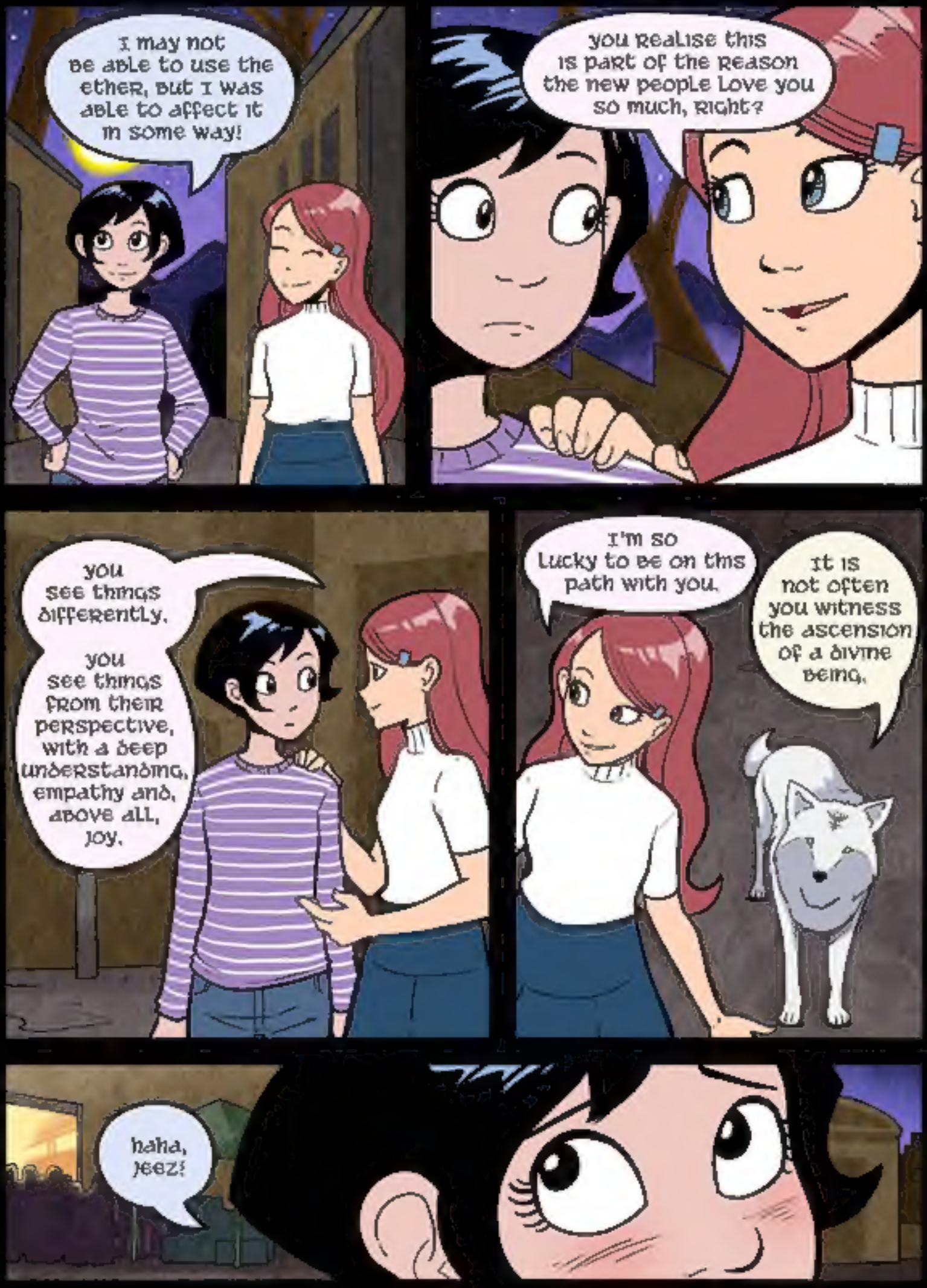
So, what now?
Now, Saslamel and I will depart.
We await your decision.
I'm being sent back!
!
Don't worry, I think I know how to get to you!

Wha... did something just happen?!
yes, kat was called forth to help with sam's ghost.
What?! I didn't see anything!
the angel was here?!
she visited upon death?
she came for sam.

so sam is really ..
we'll carry his body back to the angel
but how do we
I think I have it
I just need you to think of your angel, and the place you were born in your new bodies
yes, of course...
the beginning of our lives...

angel, we understand sam is no longer with us, but we wanted to return his body.
the greatest gift you gave him.
his only true posession
his very being.
no...
I may have made this body, but it was his mind that made him sam.
things are kinda messed up right now, but I know my friend, anne will sort things out.
in the meantime, let's do something to remember him.

annie, I don't think I agree with the arbiter
the world isn't a dead thing.
that would make the ether something separate from the rest of the world.
call it what you want, I guess. but imagination, thought, the ether, that's just as much a part of the world as rocks and stones and whatever.
the robots were alive in my mind before I made these new bodies. but I don't really respect that
I didn't give it much thought.
I didn't do much more than make them seem more alive to people like the arbiter.
but I'm happy with that.


I may not be able to use the ether, but I was able to affect it in some way!
you realise this is part of the reason the new people love you so much, right?
you see things differently.
you see things from their perspective, with a deep understanding, empathy and, above all, joy.
I'm so lucky to be on this path with you.
it is not often you witness the ascension of a divine being.
haha, jeez!

kat...
yeah, you have to get going.
but, after what happened to sam...
I want you to be careful.
who knows what's out there?
we will.
and we know how to get back here.
we just need think of the angel!
haha! come on!

Okay, just who are you?